

THE DAILY MONDAY



We're on your side

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Westward, ho!

A FEW days ago, amidst much ceremony, the 37-foot fibre-glass yacht "Trishna" left the shores of Bombay in a bid to circumnavigate the world. Manned by 10 officers of the Corps of Engineers, Trishna hopes to cover a distance of approximately 50,000 kms in one-and-a-half years, passing through Mauritius, the Cape of Good Hope, Saint Helena, Ascension Island, Barbados, Jamaica, the Panama Canal, Tahiti, Auckland, Sydney, Jakarta, Singapore and Colombo before returning home.

Trishna has been carefully selected and fully tested. It has been built by the world-famous

builders, Nautor of Finland, and designed by Sparkman and Stephens allowing for a sloop rig, a long keel and a skeg, enabling it to adapt well to rough weather. Last year, Trishna sailed from UK to Bombay, magnificently covering the distance of 13,000 kms in three-and-a-half months.

While all is ticketyboo on the surface, there is one major misapprehension which needs to be removed. The UK-to-Bombay voyage has been lauded as the first ever by an Indian team—in the process garnering empathy and assistance for this remarkable round-the-world trip. The point was further stressed by Chief of Army Staff General Vaidya, in his speech prior to the send-off.

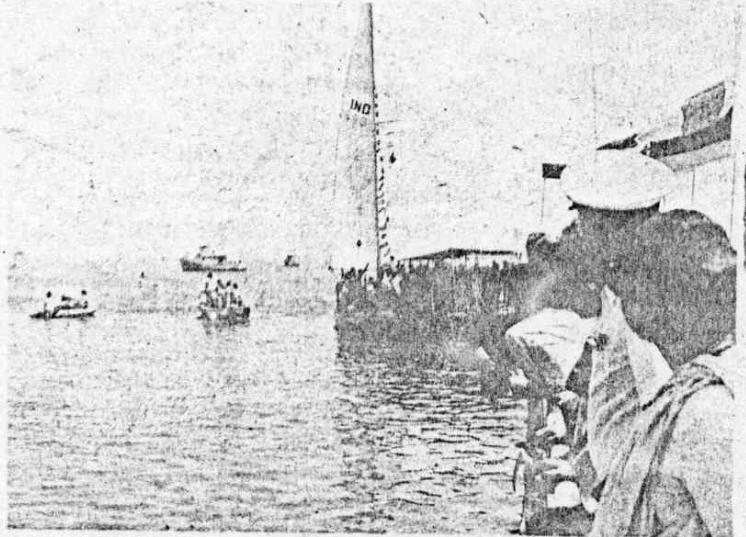
It is well-known among sailing enthusiasts, particularly by the yachting community, that the first Indians ever to undertake, and successfully complete, the arduous voyage were the indomitable "sailing couple"

Ujwala and Gulshan Rai.

The Raies, it may be recalled, braved a disaster at sea, struck out miraculously from the jaws of death, and completed an incredible voyage, their saga meticulously immortalised in a two-volume bestseller. Never before had India made such an indelible mark in ocean cruising. For a couple who could drown in a bath tub (they don't know how to swim), the feat only underscored their passion for adventure!)

Public memory is short, particularly in a country charged largely by emotion. Else how could a silly gaffe supersede that heroic homecoming and the ceremonies that were to follow. Has even the late Prime Minister's congratulatory message been buried in the tomes of the past?

The national press has gone gaga over Trishna's attempted circumnavigation. While the excitement is warranted, the record should be set right. THE DAILY as is its wont, does just that.



THE LAST WAVE! Crowds throng the marina at the Naval Sailing Club as Trishna sets out. Pic by Rajender Menon.